

The **ABC** Meditation Technique

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The components of the core practice are as simple as **ABC** --

- A- **Aware**: become mindfully aware of the world around you, noticing all the senses, and connecting yourself to this unique moment in time
- B- **Breathe**: follow the breath as a means to calm and focus the mind
- C- **Center**: withdraw the senses and focus internally, with the help of a mantra, connecting to a flow of energy that is at the core of the body

In more detail:

A – Spend 1 to 5 minutes becoming **aware**. First notice your environment – notice any sounds around you, the temperature of the air on your skin, notice how your body feels and if there is tension. Notice everything with a calm nonjudgmental curiosity and if you find your mind wandering, simply label it ‘thinking’ and return to your task of scanning your environment. This process anchors you into the present moment and is a method of mindfulness.

B – Spend 1 to 5 minutes working with your **breath**. There are several options that you might vary from day to day. One option is to simply notice, follow, and label the outbreath . . . space . . . in breath . . . space . . . outbreath . . . space . . . in breath . . . space . . . and so on. A second option is to count to 10 as you

breath out, hold for 5, count to 10 as you inhale, hold for 5, etc. (or any patterned number that feels comfortable). And finally, another option is to practice the 4-7-8 breath (inhale for 4, hold for 7, and exhale for 8). The 4-7-8 breath was devised by Dr. Andrew Weil as a quick and effective way to relax during the day.

Working with the breath is a traditional meditation technique to calm and focus the mind and body. Again, if the mind wanders (which it will!) label it 'thinking' and then bring your attention back to the breath. Or imagine the thought as a cloud that just passes across the sky of your mind. Noticing the breath starts to draw the mind inward, and prepares the body for a deeper meditation.

C – Spend 1 to 5 minutes going to **center**. This is a meditation technique that combines visualization and the repetition of a mantra to connect with a universal energy that resides at our core. This energy dwells within us and beyond us, which is why connecting with it creates an expansive 'enlightenment' kind of experience.

Begin by imagining a column of light that runs through the body like a vertical axis, in front of the spine, at the core of your body that extends upwards through the crown of the head and downwards through the feet. The light can range in colors but runs vertically through the body. Allow yourself to 'merge into the center', or connect to this core column of light and energy. In this state there is virtually no awareness of external sensations and often very little awareness of breath.

Repeating a word, a mantra, helps to anchor the mind into this state of centeredness. The word can vary from day to day but a few suggestions are “Peace”, “Love”, “OM”, “Spirit”, “Let go”, “Truth”, “Trust”, “Light”, “Flow” or any other word that speaks powerfully to you. Simply repeat the word over and over, or imagine it being written repeatedly on a board in front of you, while simultaneously feeling a column of energy and strength vibrating at the center of the body.

This phase of the ABC technique can be oriented spiritually if desired, to talk about connecting to the divine energy within, Spirit’s light that shines upon us and out from within us, that pulses through all living things. This sacred flow connects us to all beings and can create a sense of expansiveness within as the boundaries of the ego seem to dissolve. Regardless of the words used, the experience is the same: going to center to connect to something greater than the self.

Enjoy the **ABC** practice and use it regularly throughout the day. Morning and evening are particularly powerful times to practice the technique. Remember that some sessions will feel powerful and others will feel less so but no effort is ever wasted. Even if the mind seems to wander throughout a session, just label it ‘thinking’ and keep trying. The cumulative effect of regular practice helps calm the mind, soothe the soul, and harness a peacefulness that begins to spill into all aspects of living. Be gentle but persistent!